

THE
JUDGMENT
OF THE
CHURCH of ENGLAND
In the Point of
ORDINATION.

Argued from her
OFFICES and PRACTICE.

By which it plainly appears,

*That she allows a Divine inherent Right in
the Presbyters Office to Ordain.*

In a LETTER to a Friend.

By FERDINANDO SHAW, M. A.

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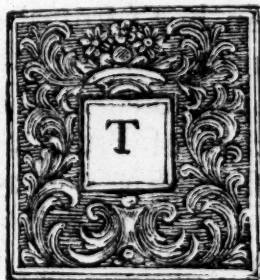
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T O T H E

Reverend Mr. J—H—, M. A.

S I R,



THE three Sermons some time since preach'd by the Reverend Mr. *Sturges*, Minister of *All-Saints* in *Derby*, in Answer to your *Vindication of Presbyterian Ordination*, are just now publish'd, under the Title of the *Divine Right of Episcopacy asserted*. The former Remarks made by a *Lay-Man*, I know you have seen before, and now I hope you will oblige the World with your Animadversions upon both together.

I shall not invade your Province by handling this Argument, which is not the Controversy I have been hitherto engaged in. But since the Author of the Sermons, *Page* 1, 2. is pleas'd to say, that a "Pamphlet has been industriously
" spread about this Town, which in Opposition
" to our Establishment, pretends to vindicate
" Presbyterian Ordination, from Scripture and
" Antiquity. This strikes at the Foundation of
" our Constitution, and casts a Blemish upon the

“ Reformation.” I thought my self obliged narrowly to look into the establish’d Offices and constant Practice of the Church in this Point, that it may be seen what Ground there is for these Assertions : And I hope I may be allow’d, without fore-stalling your Design, fairly to represent in one short View, the Judgment of the Church herein, as far as I’m able to learn it from her express Words, or most Natural Intention. This I’m sensible has been touch’d upon by several Writers upon this Head, but for my Part I do not remember to have met with any one who has profess’dly done it. I have nowhere seen the Book of Orders carefully examin’d, the Offices particularly enquir’d into, nor the Practice of the Church in her Ordinations fully declar’d ; which I cannot but wonder at, since these Things are so obvious, and so evidently in Favour of the Validity of Presbyterian Ordination. I hope therefore this will apologize for my Endeavour in the following Pages, to clear up this seeming Paradox, and to set this Matter in a true Light.

I confess that the fullest Evidence imaginable of this, is no direct Proof of the Validity of Presbyterian Ordination in itself ; that we draw from the Holy Scriptures, and the purest Antiquity, and don’t merely rely upon the Doctrine or the Practice of any particular Church for the Truth of it : And therefore it’s not for that End that I produce this Argument from the Church of *England*, but to silence those of her Sons who would nullify all Presbyterian Ordinations, as opposite to the present National Establishment, and *striking at the Foundation of the Church’s Constitution* : Though at the same time she not only allows, but expressly requires Presbyters to lay on
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Hands together with the Bishop in all the Ordinations of Priests.

It is very observable, that for above an hundred Years after the happy Reformation of Religion in *England* (which is above two Thirds of the Time to this Day) the Form of committing to Bishops and Presbyters their Office and Work made no Distinction at all in the Order ; as is evident to all who have perus'd the former Book of Ordination. In the Ordination of a *Deacon* the Office was express'd, *Take thou Authority to execute the Office of a Deacon*. This was a distinct Office, and the Person was ordain'd to a distinct Order in the Church. But then in the Ordination of a Bishop or a Presbyter, it don't appear by the Commission that was given them, that they were esteem'd distinct Orders: For there was no express mention made in the Words of ordaining them, that it was for the one, or the other Office ; in both it was said, *Receive thou the Holy Ghost, &c.* But it was not added (as it is in the present Book of Orders) either *for the Office and Work of a Priest*, or *for the Office and Work of a Bishop*. So that it's plain, there was then no real intrinsick Difference granted by the Ordination-Commission to those of the first and second Order. The Powers granted to the one, for ought appears, were granted to the other ; for as the Commission which they received made no Difference in the Name or Function, so neither did it in their Authority. Whatever Spiritual Powers the one had given 'em, to the other doubtless were given the same. Had Bishops the Power of Ordination committed to them, so had Presbyters too, who received the same Commission by the same Solemnity, in Words of the
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same Importance ; and therefore must be invested with the same Divine Powers.

Nor does it appear, by any of the Alterations made in the Offices of the Church, that she changed her Opinion in this Point, till about Fifty Years ago : Nay, 'tis most evident, that she did not, because till about that Time (as I have shew'd in an Appendix to the Second Edition of my Book of Baptism) she receiv'd Persons into her Communion, and admitted them to officiate as Ministers, without Reordination, who before had only receiv'd Ordination from meer Presbyters. Neither was there any Bar to the admission of such to the very highest Dignities in the Church, till they were restrain'd by the *present Preface* to the Book of Orders : But then 'tis to be observ'd, that these restraining Words were not added till the Year 1662 ; so that from the Reformation till that Time, those who before had been ordain'd only by Presbyters in *Geneva*, *Germany*, *France*, *Holland*, or any other *Lutheran* or *Calvinistical* Church, might be receiv'd (as several actually were) as Ministers in the Church of *England*, without Episcopal Ordination.

It is impossible, I think, however I'm sure 'tis unnecessary, to prove any thing of this Nature plainer than that *the first Reformers in England* allow'd a Power of ordaining inherent in the Presbyters Office, and that this was then the Sense of the *Church of England*. How this casts a *Blemish upon the Reformation* (as is pretended) I'm utterly unable to discover ; it can never be suppos'd to blemish the Reformation abroad, because there is no other than Presbyterian Ordination in any one of the Reform'd Churches in the World, except in *England*, *Ireland*, and some Part of our Foreign Dominions. Nor can I see

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how this is *opposite to the Establish'd Church of England*, or how it *strikes at the Foundation of its Constitution*, since 'tis evident, past contradiction, that from the beginning of the Reformation, till the Restoration, this was the avowed Doctrine of the Church, and yet for the far greatest part of that Time she kept her Ground, and her Constitution continued firm and unmoved. Nay, I doubt not but it will be readily acknowledged, that some part of that Time (at least) she was in as safe and flourishing a Condition as she ever was at any Time since.

And that she continues in the same Mind to this very Day, I doubt not to make appear from the *present Book of Orders*, which is confirmed by *Act of Parliament*, and to which every Clergy-Man is obliged to give his *unfeigned Assent and Consent*. This therefore cannot be pretended to be only the particular Opinion of some private Persons, but must be own'd to be the Establish'd Doctrine of the Church, to which all her Sons are by a most sacred Vow bound to conform.

The *Rubrick* immediately after the Ordination-Prayer, says, "The Bishop with the Priests present shall lay their Hands severally upon the
" the Head of every one that receiveth the Or-
" der of Priesthood." As Priests are not to ordain without the Bishop, so neither is the Bishop to ordain without Priests. If the *former* would be esteem'd *invalid*, so for ought I can see must the *latter* too; however, I'm sure it would be *irregular*, and expressly contrary to the Rules of the Church, by which some Priests are requir'd to be always present with, and assisting of the Bishop in all regular Ordinations, as appears by the *Rubrick* abovementioned, compar'd with other Parts of the Office; and by *Canon 31*, which requires
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that "Ordinations be perform'd in the Presence,
 "not only of the Arch-Deacon, but of the Dea-
 "con, and two Prebendaries at the least, or (if
 "they shall happen by any lawful Cause to be
 "let or hindred) in the Presence of Four other
 "grave Persons, being Masters of Arts at the
 "least, and allowed for Publick Preachers."

It cannot with any colourable Pretence be said, that the joining of Presbyters with the Bishop in this solemn Act, does only signify their witnessing to the Fact or Approbation of the Bishop's Action ; if this were all, it might be every whit as well done by the Laity who were present, or at least the Deacons ; and yet 'tis certain, they are never permitted to lay on Hands in Ordination, (as the Priests are) tho' they are permitted to be Spectators, Witnesses, or Approvers as well as they. Besides, 'tis evident from the Ordination-Commission, that the Office of Priest is convey'd by the Bishop and Presbyters jointly ; "Receive the Holy Ghost for the Office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the Imposition of our Hands." From whence 'tis as plain as Words can make it, that Priests Orders in the Church of *England* are to this very Time conferr'd by the Bishop and his Presbyters together ; that the Office is receiv'd from their joint Authority ; that the Bishop ought not to ordain without his Presbyters, any more than without Prayer or Imposition of Hands, which are all made essentially necessary : And that he cannot do it without a very material (but absolutely unwarrantable) Alteration of the Words in the Commission, and perverting the Design of it, changing the Word *our* into *my*, and saying, *by the Imposition of my Hands*, instead of *our Hands* ;
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by which Variation, how small soever it may seem, the Bishop would lodge the sole Power of Ordaining in himself, contrary to the Letter and Intention of the Office, which necessarily supposes, that Presbyters have the same intrinsic Power with the Bishop; otherwise 'twould be no other than a solemn Piece of Mockery to deliver the Commission in the Name of the Presbyters equally with the Bishop. For how could they convey a Power to others which they had not in themselves? None certainly should lay on Hands at all in giving the Ministerial Authority, but such to whose Office it belongs to commit the same Doctrine to others, which themselves have received a Commission to be Teachers of; no more than any should consecrate the Elements in the Eucharist, who were never impower'd to administer that Sacrament.

There's not the least Appearance of any Distinction by the Words in the Office, that the granting the Commission is only from the Bishop, and that what the Presbyters do in conjunction with him, is only their consenting to what he does. The Church, in the *Preface* to the Book of Orders, supposes Imposition of Hands necessary to the conveying the Office of the Priesthood: Then she requires Priests, by the *Rubrick*, to lay on Hands together with the Bishop: And upon the performing of that Action, the Bishop instantly declares in express Words, "That the Office and Work of a Priest is committed unto thee by the Imposition of our Hands;" which can never be meant in any proper Way of speaking, of the Bishop's Hands alone, but must include his Presbyters who were Partners in laying on Hands with him, as having a Share also in conveying the Power which was granted by that Action, by a Right inherent in their Office, tho'

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by the Ecclesiastical Constitution of the Country they are restrain'd from *exercising it alone, as the Bishop himself also is*. He may indeed ordain a Deacon without the Concurrence of his Presbyters, and then the Imposition of his own Hands alone is requir'd ; "The Bishop laying his Hands severally upon the Head of every one of them, shall say, Take thou Authority to execute the Office of a Deacon in the Church of God, committed unto thee, &c." Whence 'tis very plain, that the Church makes a manifest Distinction betwixt what the Bishop can do alone, and what he cannot do without his Presbyters ; she allows him to ordain Deacons by his sole Power, and then the Office is conferr'd only by the Imposition of his own Hands : But when he is to ordain Priests, then he must have the Concurrence of his Presbyters with him, and the Office is said to be conferr'd by the Imposition of *our Hands*, that is, of Bishops and Presbyters conjunctly ; that is, done by both together, which the Church allows not to be done by *either separately*.

This may be illustrated by two Instances ; the one taken from our Statute Laws, which are enacted by the Authority of the *King and Parliament* ; by which every Body understands there's a Power of making Laws lodg'd in *the King and Parliament together*, tho' by the Constitution of the State neither can make Laws alone. *The Royal Assent*, 'tis true, is necessary to the passing of any thing into a Law, and so is the *Concurrence of the Parliament*, not as it meerly signifies their *Approbation of the King's Act*, but as 'tis *their own Act also*, by having a Share in the Legislature, conjunctively with the King.

The other Instance is from the Office of *consecrating Bishops*, which is made exactly to correspond with that of *Ordering Priests*, and therefore must

must be allow'd to be a Parallel Case: In this Office, conformable to the other, (*mutatis mutandis*) the *Rubrick* just after the Ordination-Prayer, requires *the Archbishop and Bishops present* (of whom there must be two at least) to lay their Hands upon the Head of the elected Bishop, upon which Action, the Archbishop immediately pronounces the Commission, (as the Bishop does in the Ordination of Priests) but declares '*the Office is committed by the Imposition of our Hands*, that is, the Episcopal Function is convey'd by the Imposition of the Hands of the Archbishop and Bishops together, without whom he ought not to consecrate a Bishop. Now if a Bishop can no more ordain a Priest, without the concurrence of his Presbyters, than an Archbishop can consecrate a Bishop without the concurrence of his Bishops; if Presbyters are requir'd to use the same Action together with the Bishops in the Ordination of Priests, as Bishops are with the Archbishop in Consecration of a Bishop, viz. *Imposition of Hands*; and if the Commission granted to Priests by the Bishop and his Presbyters be in the same Words with the Commission granted to Bishops by the Archbishop and his Bishops, viz. *Committed unto thee by the Imposition of our Hands*; methinks it must undeniably follow, that Presbyters have as much an inherent Right in their Office for ordaining Priests, as Bishops have in theirs for consecrating Bishops.

It can't be pretended, that the Archbishop alone conveys the Power, and that the Bishops who join with him in the laying on of Hands, do it merely as Witnesses to, or Approvers of his Act; both because the Archbishop's Power over Bishops is granted to be merely Ecclesiastical, I mean owing to Human Institution, and not to a Divine Right; and because the Archbishop's consecrating without Bishops would be adjudged

invalid, or at least uncanonical. To which let me add, by the Direction of the *Rubrick*, "Some other Bishop may be appointed by lawful Commission" in the Place of the Archbishop, which is commonly practised, and was very lately (as the publick News inform'd us) at the Consecration of the present Bishop of *Gloucester*. Now how could a Commission be granted to any Bishop to supply the room of the Archbishop at a Consecration, if Bishops had not an inherent Right in their Office to consecrate? For a Commission can no more give a Power to execute any Part of the Episcopal Function, which by Virtue of their Office they were not before invested with at their Consecration, than a Commission to a Laymen would empower him to preach, to baptize, to consecrate and administer the Eucharist, to ordain, and perform all the Parts of the Ministerial Office, without Ordination; and such a Commission we have been frequently told the Church of *England* esteem'd invalid.

Upon the whole Matter, let Men make what Pretensions and Evasions they will, yet 'tis certain from the Book of Orders and the Practice of the Church of *England*, that she allows Presbyters to ordain in conjunction with their Bishop, which must be understood (if Words and Actions have any determined Sense) by virtue of a Divine Right inherent in their Office.

If this be not her Sense, what an Absurdity must she be guilty of in ordering their Concurrence in the *internal Sign*, who have no manner of Interest or Right in the Ministerial Conveyance of *the thing signify'd by it*? Just as if it should be said, a Deacon hath Power to use the Words of Institution in Baptism, and to apply the proper Element, but yet hath not Power to baptize; or that a Presbyter may consecrate the Eucharisti-
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cal Elements, according to Christ's Institution, and distribute them to the People, and yet not have Power to administer the Lord's-Supper.

If *Imposition of Hands* in Ordination be a meer Cypher and empty *Formality in Presbyters*, will it not be concluded that so it is in *Bishops* too, and that the laying on of the Hands of the one and the other is but a needless Ceremony, and signifies no more to the Conveyance of Ministerial Authority, than if the Hands of meer Lay-men were impos'd? But if this *external Rite* be suppos'd to convey the Ministerial Commission from the *Bishop*, why does it not import the same thing from *Presbyters*, who are enjoyn'd it by the same Authority as the Bishop, and in Conjunction with him? Will not every one naturally conclude, that since the *Action is the same*, since 'tis done at the *same Time*, in the *same Manner*, with the *same Words*, and declar'd by the Bishop himself to be for the *same End*, that it conveys the *same Powers*? This my Lay-Antagonist must agree to, because in his *Answer*, P. 19. he says, "I'm sure our Saviour gave his Commission to the Apostles to baptize, in as solemn a Manner, (and at the same Time) as he has any where commission'd them to exercise the other Parts of the Ministerial Function, *Matt. 28, 19, 20.* " *Mark 16. 15, 16.*" So that he who is commission'd to one Part of the Ministerial Office (by our Author's Confession) is commission'd to the whole of it; for, says he, "Neither our Saviour, nor his Apostles, made any Distinction, and then I'm sure 'tis not lawful for us to make one." Whence it follows, that Presbyters have as much a Divine Right to *ordain* (which as he rightly observes is one Part of the Ministerial Office) as to *preach*, or to *administer the Sacraments*: That they have a Right to *these* by the
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abovemention'd Commission, is what all do allow; and whatever distinct or ampler Powers are contain'd in that *other Commission*, Joh. 20. 22, 23. the Church in exprefs Words invests them with at their Ordination, "Receive the Holy Ghost for
 " the Office and Work of a Priest in the Church
 " of God, now committed unto thee by the Im-
 " position of our Hands; whose Sins thou dost
 " forgive, they are forgiven, and whose Sins
 " thou dost retain, they are retained; and be-
 " thou a faithful Dispenser of the Word of God
 " and of his Holy Sacraments, in the Name, &c.
 The Prohibiting of Presbyters therefore in the exercise of their Ordaining Power, is according to our Author, *utterly unlawful*: And indeed, who can deprive them of that Power, which Christ gave them by his Charter, and the Church invests them with at their Ordination?

There are only two Things offer'd that I know of, to prove this not to be the Sense of the Church of *England*, both which Mr. *Harris* has hinted at in the *Defence of his Letter*, p. 7, 8, 9, 10.

The one is, that the Church permits none but those who are Episcopally ordain'd to officiate in her Communion. In *Answer* to which, I refer him to what I have already said in the *Validity of Baptism*, &c. p. 78, 79, 80. Second Edition, and to what I shall farther hint presently.

But the other, which is the main thing insisted on by all the Writers on the Argument, is the *Preface to the Book of Ordination*, wherein it's declar'd,
 " That 'tis evident to all Men, diligently reading
 " Holy Scripture and ancient Authors, that from
 " the Apostles Time there have been these Or-
 " ders of Ministers in Christ's Church, Bishops,
 " Priests and Deacons;" from whence Mr. *Harris* infers, " That the Church looks upon Bishops
 " to have the sole Power of Ordination lodg'd in
 " them,

" them, exclusive of all others." Now that this does not follow, is certain, unless this *skilful Curate* has a knack of making the same thing to be both true and false at the same Time. For in this very Office the Church does (as I have shewn) appoint "Presbyters to join with the Bishop in Ordination, and he has no Direction to do it without them." And will Mr. *Harris* put such a Sense upon the *Preface*, which is flatly contradicted in the *Book itself*? One wou'd be tempted to suspect he had never read the Office he was ordain'd by, and to which he has declar'd his Assent; or that he suppos'd his Reader wou'd never peruse it, otherwise he would not have laid down this Assertion. Nay, by *Can. 35.* the Bishop is requir'd, "before he admit any Person to Holy Orders, diligently to examine him in the Presence of those Ministers that shall assist him at the Imposition of Hands: And they who shall assist the Bishop in laying on of Hands, shall be sufficient Preachers, to the Number of Three at the least." And does this look like the Church's lodging the sole Power of Ordination in the Bishop, exclusive of all others? Or is it not the direct contrary?

I know very well, that by the *Preface* no one is allow'd to exercise any Ministerial Function in the Church of *England*, without being admitted according to the Form in that Office, or has formerly had Episcopal Ordination: But then this is nothing at all to the Purpose of proving the Church to be for nullifying all Presbyterian Ordinations, because according to the *Form in that very Office*, no Man can be ordain'd a Priest without the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery, as well as of the Bishop. And would Mr. *Harris* make the World believe, that the Church's Judgment is directly contrary to her express Words and constant Practice?

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I cannot but observe here the great Difference amongst the Episcopal Divines themselves, in their Disputes upon this Head with the Dissenters. If they plead the Validity of Presbyterian Ordination, then *some* of their Antagonists presently tell them, the Church allows no such thing, *this strikes at the Foundation of its Constitution* : The Power of Ordination, they say, is appropriated to the Bishop, and Presbyters have no manner of Right to convey the Ministerial Office. But if the Bishop's sole Power in Ordination happen to be objected against, as an unreasonable Encroachment upon the Presbyters Office, then *others* presently deny this, and readily tell you that the Bishop ordains only as a Presbyter, and is no more than President, or Moderator, whom the Church has appointed to preside in all Ordinations, " but that she owns the Presbyters Divine " inherent Right, by appointing them to be " Partners with the Bishop.

Dr. *Forbes*, in his *Irenicum*, l. 2. c. 11. says, " that Presbyters have a Share with Bishops in " the Imposition of Hands, not only as consent- " ing to the Ordination, but as Ordainers with " the Bishop, by a Power receiv'd from the Lord, " and as praying for Grace to be conferr'd on " the Persons ordain'd by them and the Bishop.

The Author of the *Vindication of the Principles of the Cyprianick Age*, (a Book which I have just now procur'd a sight of, written by an Episcopal Divine) strenuously argues in his 4th Chap. against the sole Power of Bishops in Ordination ; he brings a Multitude of Testimonies from *Scots* and *English* Divines (some of 'em Men of the greatest Name for Learning, and warm Advocates for Prelacy) in Favour of his Opinion ; and, p. 182. he sums up all with this remarkable Quotation ; " Neither the Confession of the *Eng'ish* Church,

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"nor her Apology, nor her Catechism, nor her Liturgy, nor her Form of Ordinations, requires from any Man, any manner of way, that he should believe that Bishops have the sole Power of Ordinations." These Authorities I recommend to the consideration of Mr. Harris, and those who chime with him in his Notion.

The learned Dr. Forbes, in the Words I have just quoted from him, has exactly represented what I take to be the Judgment of the Church of England upon this Head.

That Presbyters have a Share with the Bishop in the Ordination of Presbyters, is not to be deny'd: And whence is this Power receiv'd? Either it must be from Christ's Charter, or from the sole Authority of the Church; that the Church claims any Power of authorizing such to ordain, who have no inherent Right to it by a Divine Commission, is what I never heard she pretended to. It must therefore be granted, that it is from the Power which Christ has originally lodg'd in the Presbyters Office, that the Church takes them in to join with the Bishop in Ordination. And indeed this seems to be the very Reason why she requires Presbyters to do this, when she restrains Deacons from it, viz. because she believes the former have a Divine Right to it, as an essential Part of their Office, which the latter have not.

From the Premises, which I have laid down, these two Conclusions do necessarily follow.

1. That the Restraints or Limitations laid upon Presbyters in the Church of England, in the Exercise of their Ordination Power, is meerly from Human Authority. If it has been prov'd (as I verily think it has) that the Church allows a Divine inherent Right in the Presbyters Office

to ordain, and that this is an Essential Branch of their Ecclesiastical Authority ; then it must follow, that to hinder or abridge them in the Execution of any Part of this Office, must be only from the Power of the Church or State, from Ecclesiastical Canons or Acts of Parliament. For 'tis certain, there cannot be a Divine Right in the Presbyters Office to the whole of the Ministerial Function, and yet a Divine Right too to confine 'em in the Point of Ordination to the Execution of it only in conjunction with a Bishop. If it be pretended that this is the whole of what they have a Divine Right to in this Point, it may well be expected, that clear Proof be produc'd of it from the Commission itself, by which our Saviour has given them any Right at all.

'Tis granted, that the Church prohibits meer Presbyters ordaining alone ; but then this is perhaps to advance the Episcopal Authority, or as may be pretended, to keep the Presbyters in due Subjection ; to prevent Schism and Confusion, for greater Decency and Order, or for some other prudential Reasons : But no such thing as a Divine Warrant is produc'd or pretended for this Restraint, (in the Beginning it was not so) this is solely from the Church's assum'd Power. No Law of God can be suppos'd to hinder them from the Exercise of that Power, which the Divine Commission gave 'em a Right to execute. If a positive Law of God had forbid 'em this Power, it would be wholly unlawful to exercise it, tho' by a Bishops Order, or in conjunction with him.

2. If it be prov'd, that the Church allows a Divine inherent Right in the Presbyters Office to ordain, it must follow, that she allows the Ordinations of all the foreign Reform'd Churches, perform'd by meer Presbyters, to be in themselves valid. This she must own, or else nullify
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the Orders, and consequently Christianity, of all other Protestant Churches in the World. And tho' some who call themselves her Sons have of late done this, yet 'tis certain, this gross Uncharitableness is not to be charg'd upon their Mother the Church. The learned *University of Oxford*, acknowledging the Validity of the Orders of the Church of *Geneva* in their late Letter to her, have clear'd the Church of England from this foul Imputation: What tho' she has thought fit by her Rules of Church-Government, not to admit any of her Ministers without Episcopal Ordination, yet she has no where declar'd that such who have no other than meer Presbyterian Ordination, are not valid Ministers in their own Churches; nay, while she allows a Divine Right in the Office, she must own a Validity in the Execution of it, if not in her Communion, where they are restrain'd by Human Laws, yet in their own Churches where there are no such Restraints upon them. How far the Ecclesiastical and Civil Laws of a Country may extend, as to appointing the Kind of Church-Government or Number of Ecclesiastical Governours in that Country, and regulating of them as to the Execution of their several Functions under their own Establishment, is, I know, a Controversy which has been warmly agitated; but in Fact, all Churches take a Liberty of making Rules and Orders as to Discipline, Modes of Worship, and other Circumstantials, for the good Government of their own Constitution, and appropriate their Revenues, and bestow their Preferments under what Conditions they see good; but then these Regulations are no ways binding to other Churches, who have the same Liberty themselves. Thus the Church of *England* makes Laws for those of her own Body, both Clergy and Laity; she declares who shall be admitted to officiate in her Com-

Communion, and upon what Terms; but she don't pretend that all other Protestant Churches are bound by these Rules, much less does she unchurch them, if in several Particulars they vary from her. She has lodg'd the Ordaining Power in the *Bishop and Presbyters conjunctly*; but then she don't null the Orders granted by a *Bishop alone*, or by *Presbyters alone*, (how irregular soever she may esteem 'em) because she believes a Divine inherent Right in those Officers to convey the Ministerial Function.

I have not in this Essay searched into the Holy Scriptures, nor waded into Antiquity, to find out in whom the Ordaining Power is lodg'd; but have confin'd myself to the single Point I propos'd, of shewing the Judgment of the Church of *England* upon this Head: And if I have prov'd what I undertook, I hope none of the Clergy will be so forward to condemn, and even nullify Presbyterian Ordination, when themselves had the Hands of Presbyters laid upon them in receiving the Ministerial Commission. Methinks it shou'd reconcile the Sons of the Church to the Validity of the Dissenting Ministry, when it appears that their Mother the Church allows a Divine inherent Right in the Presbyters Office to ordain. But if it should happen that I'm mistaken herein, 'tis no Prejudice at all to the Dissenters Cause, because the Validity of their Orders, as you have solidly prov'd, is founded upon a Divine Charter, and the Practice of the most Primitive Times, by which we are willing to stand or fall.

I am, Sir,

Derby, April 4.
1715.

Your Affectionate Friend,

and Humble Servant, &c

F I N I S.